

NH Forest Advisory Board  
June 14, 2022  
DNCR Headquarters, Concord

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Susan Francher, Dave Publicover, Stacey Lumieux, Tom Thomson, Steve Roberge, Mark Zankel, Jim Oehler, Jasen Stock, Jack Bronnenberg, Charles Niebling.

Remote: Matt Leahy, Dennis McKenney, Carol Foss

1. Meeting Opening

a. Introductions

FAB members introduce themselves. Director Hackley unable to attend today.

b. Review of Agenda

- c. Minutes – motion to approve the minutes of January 21, 2022 as corrected by Jim Oehler, second by Jack Bronnenberg, motion carried (2 abstentions)

2. Director's Report

a. Staffing Updates

- i. Susan updated the board on the status of F&L vacant positions being filled. Jasen asked if DES permitting has had an increase in data requests, Susan replied that she was not aware if that is the case. Jim Oehler of F&G commented that it has impacted them.

b. Forest Service Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA AKA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding

Susan gave an overview of BIL funding being received by Forests and Lands through USFS State & Private Forestry funding streams. Jasen Stock asked how the stewardship funds would be used. Steve reported that the portion received by UNH Cooperative Extension will be used to update GFGS which is now 12 years old. Tom Thomson stated that he hopes the revised document would include an emphasis. Matt Leahy asked if there would be any G&C oversight regarding the use of the funds. Susan replied that the agency would be required to go to G&C to accept and expend the funds and the request would include a description of the projects. Jasen Stock asked why – of all the things – revision of GFGS rose to the top of projects, noting that it seems like dealing with low grade wood markets is a more pressing issue. Steve explains that not only is it 10 years old and there have been comments that some pieces need to be updated. Jasen suggested proceeding cautiously and remember that it has legal implications. Dave Publicover agreed that there may not be a lot to change but there are certainly sections that need updating. Mark suggested being precise about what needs to be updated and give thought to how to make the document more accessible and useful.

Jim Oehler suggested a survey to understand what people feel needs to be changed – Jack Bronnenberg agreed with Jasen's comments. Take a cautious approach to update and not revise. Regarding why this project was chosen, Steve Roberge stated that Coop Ext staff looked at the prioritized stewardship strategies in Forest Action Plan and there are 4 or 5 that address the importance of GFGS and the need to update the document.

Tom T believes the agency should think about how the funds could be used to help develop low grade markets. Without these markets landowners may be forced to sell their land. Jim – legislative committee. Jasen stated that a proposal was developed to do just that, has been shopped around and haven't been able to secure the funding. He also noted that the State legislature pass a bill to establish a Low Grade Wood Markets Commission but didn't include funding to do the study and create the report. Susan cautioned that the use of these funds may be limited to current program-specific guidelines. Stacy –agreed that it is important to understand what the spending sideboards are. Matt Leahy stated that the commission seems to be an opportunity to address the problem and encourages the agency figure out a way to use these dollars to support the work of the commission.

Charlie Niebling asked if there is any data demonstrate the importance of the GFGS and how it is used. He also asked if the update of the GFGS take all of the stewardship funds? Steve R replied that they can get website visitation numbers and that as of new Cooperative Extension would get \$80,000 in this year's stewardship BIL funds and that will be used to hire a facilitator to revise/update the document. The board agreed that it would be a good idea to determine if the Stewardship BIL funds could be used to support the work of the low-grade commission.

**Action items - Patrick will send the board NH's BIL funding allocation and the percent of the total being allotted to each Cooperative Forestry program area. Steve Roberge will contact USFS Eastern Region Forest Stewardship Program Manager to identify spending limitations on the State Forest Action Plan Implementation Funding.**

- c. Planned State Forest Nursery updates. Planned improvements include:
  - i. Online sales
  - ii. Irrigation system
  - iii. New cooler

**Action Item - Patrick will send FAB the cost of all planned improvements**

### 3. FAP Implementation

- a. Overview of the survey

Susan distributed the results of the survey, there were only 4 responses.

Jasen Stock indicated that development of low grade markets is a priority for him and that he was surprised not to see recreation management. It was evident in the legislature this session that managing recreation has become a bigger, emerging issue. He added that Fish & Game, as well as the conservation community, has a dog in this fight and landowners are finding it difficult to deal with recreation impacts on their property. Often their only recourse is to post the land.

Tom Thomson agreed with Jasen.

Mark Zankel agreed that recreation mgt is a priority, as are strategies 18 & 19 under the climate change focus area, and low grade wood markets.

Charlie Niebling stated that the document is incredibly broad. A major theme is keeping forests as forests and you do that through land protection and strong forest products markets. Nothing else can happen if we continue to lose forests at that rate we have.

Dave Publicover agreed, adding that forests should remain a carbon sink and not a carbon source. He also stated that he would like to see a robust tracking of total carbon storage. It can be done through FIA with hefty standard errors. Low grade wood markets are critical.

Regarding the Forest Society comments in the survey regarding the importance of communication and the eroding public support regarding forest management, Mark Zankel asked if others are finding this to be increasing.

Jim Oehler stated he certainly thinks that communication and outreach should be an integral part of FAP implementation. They (fish & Game) have been doing “Habitat Happenings” videos as part of their outreach with great success.

Stacy Lemieux noted that the WMNF has been having conversations with State of Maine, and the GMNF is having conversations with the State of Vermont regarding common messaging. Too often we tend to address public concerns regarding forest management when issues arise – as is the case with the timber harvest adjacent to Lake Tarleton. with episodic happenings.

Dave Publicover suggests looking at SPNHF storymap regarding their forest management work. Jasen Stock stated that there is an important role for conservation groups to play in messaging regarding forest management work. They may be more trusted and credible to some audiences. He also expressed concerned about increased aggressiveness, as was evidenced by the tree-spiking incidents on State and Forest Society properties.

Jim Oehler suggested that the Forest Advisory Board could work on a communications plan that would be multi-faceted and valuable to most members of the board.

Matt Leahy –stated that SPNHF would support efforts to develop integrated messaging. He also said that tree spiking can’t be allowed to go un-responded to.

Tom Thomson noted that an important way to support keeping forests and forests is the support Current Use Program – which turns 50 years this year.

Charlie Niebling asked what the Forest Advisory Board role is in implementation of the plan. Adding that development of a communication plan is unlike what role has traditionally been but could be viewed within the purview of the board. He suggested that prior to the next meeting a few members meet with Patrick to discuss the role board can play in fostering increased communication.

Niebling, Oehler, Stock volunteered to meet with the Director.

Members also expressed concern regarding the opposition to the Forest Service timber sale adjacent to the Lake Tarleton and the precedent it would set if the sale were halted.

Mark Zankel agreed that there is value in shared messaging and asked if some of the BIL money be used to support message development. The Tarleton issue would be the perfect issue to be addressed by a joint communication strategy. Niebling noted that the Tilton diner group was developed to address broad issues.

**Action Item: Prior to the next FAB meeting Charlie Niebling, Jim Oehler, Jasen Stock will meet with Patrick Hackley to discuss the role the board can play in fostering increased communication**

Susan Francher asked for the boards thoughts about holding focus groups to gather broader input from people in the natural resource regarding plan implementation priorities. Members suggested it might be better to take of existing events, such as saving special places, TOA annual meeting, mud season breakfast, Farm and Forest Expo, and others.

4. Agency Budgeting

- a. State agencies will be entering the 2-year budgeting process this summer. First step is to provide agency priorities for spending which then go to the governor, who releases his budget. Then the legislature develops their budgets.

5. Roundtable

Jim Oehler – Recovering Americas Wildlife Act – has passed committees in the house and senate. Waiting for floor votes. Would mean about 11 million dollars annually for F&G to implement WAPs. It requires a 75/25 cost share. 55 million dollars to revamp hatchery system. Will go from 6 to 4 hatcheries. Will help get into compliance with water quality standards. F&G is developing a new strategic plan which is being led by the commission Wildlife habitat program is hiring a land surveyor, also a new person starting on Friday focused on property infrastructure.

Carol Foss – NH Audubon sanctuaries manager Phil Brown took a job with the Harris Center, Parker Schuerman has joined the staff as Director of Land and Ecological Management.

Dennis McKenney – Well-deserved thanks to the Rangers for investigating and arresting the person responsible for tree spiking. Well – deserved thanks

Matt Leahy– Echoed Dennis’ comments regarding the tree spiking arrest. NH Executive Council approved the MOU between SPNHF and DNCR on Monadnock.

Dave Publicover– AMC CEO John Judge stepped down; Susan Arnold is the acting CEO. In August AMC will close on another property in Maine bringing the total acres owned by the organization to over 100,000. Approximately 50 percent is under active forest management

Mark Zankel – TNC will be hiring a conservation coordinator (entry level), director of government relations and policy, and a climate adaptation program manager.

Stacy Lemieux– Deputy Forest Supervisor Diane Taliaferro has left for Shoshonne National Forest. Due to increase funding looking to hire new positions. Gearing up for summer recreation season. Staff is also busy reconnecting with partners – lots of connections were lost during the covid years. Dave Publicover asked if the positions will be sustained beyond the 5-year funding.

Stacey stated that their hope is that funding stability would allow for sustained staffing beyond the 5 years..

Jasen Stock– The legislative season has wrapped up. NHTOA will reach out to the hunting and hunting guide community to have discussions regarding game camera issues.

Career field day at Bear Brook - Over 200 students and 30 agency/organization representatives. Focus on low grade wood markets, education and working with landowners emphasizing there are still opportunities and strategies for conducting sustainable management activities. Real estate market is hot and pressure to subdivide or sell land is high

Steve Roberge – Cooperative Extension staff is seeing high number of new landowners creating huge educational curve.

Projects:

- They have received a grant for rehabilitation demonstrations stands, have recently been awarded funds to look at climate smart forestry, and they have entered into a cost share relationship with NRCS to provide information regarding their programs.
- They are also working with the Forest Society to use one of their properties to use as demonstration.
- Wildfire and prescribe fire training in Grafton County
- Landowner needs survey, and survey of impact of woodlot visits.
- Working with UNH sawmill to promote as a public resource. Have coordinated demonstrations and planning for monthly sawmill programs

Staffing - Still having difficult time filling the vacancy in Coos County. John Gunn left Coop Ext to work for national TNC, Haley Andriozzi was promoted to state specialist.

Jack Bronnenberg – Challenging issue for logging industry is fuel costs. It has added 20% to his operations costs. Logging capacity will be an increasing issue for the industry.

Has been a bump in hardwood and hemlock pulp prices.

The Dave Pilla Memorial Forest was dedicated on Proctor Academy property.

Last weekend there was a truck parade in honor of Hunter Carbee, followed by a celebration at the plant.

Tom Thomson – The celebration of life for John O'Brien was attended by approximately 400 people. John was a very well-respected forester, which was evidenced by such a strong attendance.

As mentioned by Jasen and Jack – low grade markets and diesel prices are having a negative impact on the industry. Also, there are very few young people getting in the business and there will soon be a significant number of people retiring.

Butterfly counts are being done on the property, and the property will be open for Lupine tours

6. Public Comment – no members of the public were in attendance

Motion to adjourn – Jasen, second by Jack, motion passes.

